

Dateline DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

A Message from the Secretary

In early June, DHMH was awarded over \$19 million in federal funds to help us strengthen Maryland's preparedness and response to bioterrorist threats and other health emergencies.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded us \$16.8 million to address statewide capacity issues and we received \$2.3 million from the Health Resources and Services Administration to help hospitals improve their emergency preparedness response capability.

Some of you may know that bioterrorism is an issue I have been interested in for a number of years. In fact, our Department's preparation efforts began in 1998, well before last fall's attacks on our country.

The plan we have developed involves a coalition of DHMH, local health departments and private-sector hospitals.

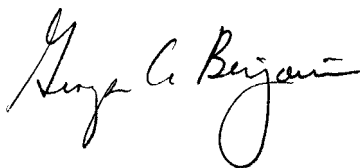
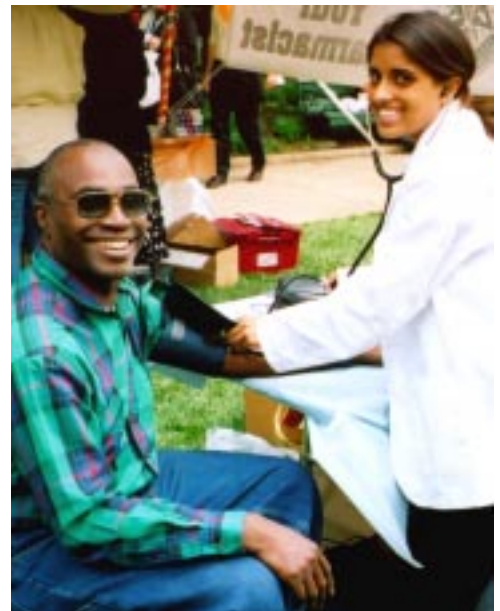
DHMH will invest approximately \$8.8 million to develop a coordinated statewide public health emergency response plan, upgrade laboratory facilities, expand and improve emergency communication capabilities between State and local public health agencies

and organizations, and conduct statewide emergency drills. We will also enhance our capability to monitor disease outbreaks around-the-clock and to test for infectious disease outbreaks.

Local health departments will receive \$8 million to fund local emergency drills, provide education for public health professionals, improve emergency communications and coordination systems, and enhance their ability to detect and respond to public health threats.

Maryland hospitals will receive \$2.1 million to enhance emergency response plans, update disease reporting systems, purchase protective supplies and equipment for staff and patients, and upgrade decontamination, isolation and quarantine facilities.

This federal funding will help us strengthen our ability to act in a more timely manner, but it should be considered a short-term solution. If Maryland and the nation's public health infrastructure is to remain ready for the foreseeable future, the federal support will need to continue.

Sarita Doshi, an intern at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, takes the blood pressure of Willie C. Simm at the Board of Pharmacy's booth at the 85th Baltimore Flower Mart in May. Mr. Simm was one of 100 people who had their blood pressure checked. The Board's booth won the first place ribbon in the Health Village section of the Mart.

Give Blood!

DHMH has a blood drive scheduled for

**Tuesday July 9 and
Wednesday July 10.**

It will be conducted in the O'Connor Building lobby from **9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.** each day.

Call Althea Gibson at 410-767-6403 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Lab Duo Retire After Many Years of Service

The Laboratories Administration's Microbiology Division threw quite a party on June 7 for the husband and wife team of Althea and Leonard Glenn, two long-time DHMH employees who have retired.

Leonard, a 45-year employee, started with the Laboratories Administration when the Central Lab was still located at 16 East 23rd Street. He has served as Maintenance Chief IV and head of the Preventive Maintenance Unit.

Althea, a 37-year employee, met Leonard while she was an employee in the Microbiology Division. She worked as a Public Health Laboratory Scientist IV and head of the Enteric Bacteriology Laboratory.

Over 140 of Althea and Leonard's co-workers, relatives and now-fellow retirees attended a festive retirement celebration held in the O'Connor Building lobby. With Leonard's retirement, Dr. J. Mehse Joseph and Dorethea Greene are tied as the current employees with the longest service to the Administration. Both were hired on December 30, 1957.



Congratulations to . . .

Dr. David Blythe, who has been named Acting State Epidemiologist. David joined DHMH in 2000 as the assistant to the State Epidemiologist after a two-year assignment to the Department as a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Epidemic Intelligence Service officer.

Dr. Ross Brechner, who has accepted a position as director of the newly-created Biological Agents Registry Program in the Laboratories Administration. Ross previously was the State Epidemiologist.

Lee Williamson, Performance Excellence Coordinator, who has been appointed to the 2002 Board of Examiners for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Lee will be responsible for reviewing and evaluating applications submitted for the award, which is the highest level of national recognition for performance excellence that a U.S. organization can receive.

Performance Excellence Awards Presented

One hundred DHMH staff involved in the response to the bioterrorism emergency of 2001 were among more than 300 employees honored for performance excellence by the Department during ceremonies in the O'Connor Building lobby on June 21.

Those honored include staff from throughout the Department who worked hundreds of hours on evening and weekends to meet the demands for information, anthrax testing and access to treatment. As an example, one individual developed genetic techniques to rapidly identify bioterrorism diseases. This resulted in greatly aiding the rapid identification of anthrax. A team of seven was recognized for improving and implementing a surveillance system to detect bioterrorism-related illnesses. This system has improved detection of other diseases, as well.

Other awardees were cited for

innovative ideas. For example, one employee at a Mental Hygiene Administration facility was cited for developing improved patient restraints that resulted in reduced injury to patients. This innovation has been adopted by the manufacturer and is being used by other facilities in Maryland and nationwide.



STATE OF MARYLAND

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